



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

December 28, 2020

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

On June 29, 2020, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) publicly released a report entitled 5G DEPLOYMENT: FCC Needs Comprehensive Strategic Planning to Guide Its Efforts, GAO 20-468. The Report addressed challenges with 5G deployment, including the federal government's role in managing the availability of spectrum, deployment of 5G networks, and closing the digital divide. The Report recommends that the FCC Chairman "develop, in coordination with NTIA and other relevant stakeholders, specific and measurable performance goals—with related strategies and measures—to manage spectrum demands associated with 5G deployment." It recommends that the FCC Chairman also develop such performance goals "to determine the effects 5G deployment and any mitigating actions may have on the digital divide."

I share your interest in ensuring that the FCC sets and achieves goals to facilitate the deployment of 5G and other advanced wireless services, including making spectrum available, determining the effects of 5G deployment, and ensuring that 5G deployment and related efforts close the digital divide. As Chairman, one of my top priorities has been the development and implementation of the 5G FAST Plan, which has allowed us to push more spectrum into the marketplace, remove unnecessary barriers to the deployment of infrastructure, and modernize outdated regulations. As the Report acknowledges, the Commission has taken numerous steps to achieve the goals of the 5G FAST Plan, including dramatically increasing the availability of low-, mid- and high-band spectrum. For instance, on high-band spectrum, we executed the goals of the 5G FAST Plan by making available and auctioning 4,950 megahertz of spectrum. To put that in perspective, that is more spectrum than was used for terrestrial mobile broadband by all wireless service providers in the United States combined before these auctions started. On mid-band, which the GAO Report identifies as critical, we executed the 5G FAST Plan by making 150 megahertz of spectrum available in the 3.5 GHz band (3550-3700 MHz), beginning an auction earlier this month of 280 megahertz of spectrum at 3.7-3.98 GHz, and proposing a plan to prepare for auction 100 megahertz of spectrum in the 3.45-3.55 GHz band. I would also highlight our efforts to make available unassigned spectrum in the 2.5 GHz band (2496-2690 MHz), including granting more than 150 applications for overlay licenses covering rural Tribal lands as part of our Rural Tribal Priority Window. We are currently in the process of granting



additional Rural Tribal Priority Window license applications through a second processing round and hope to quickly complete our review of the remaining applications. We have also made significant mid-band spectrum available for unlicensed service. This year, we made 1,200 megahertz of spectrum available for unlicensed use in the 6 GHz band, spurring the deployment of Wi-Fi 6, the next generation of Wi-Fi technology. We likewise voted to open-up an additional 45 megahertz of unlicensed spectrum in the 5.850-5.895 GHz band for advanced broadband use, including connectivity in rural and underserved areas. Our decision on the 5.9 GHz band immediately made this spectrum available for indoor use in conjunction with other, adjacent-band unlicensed spectrum, creating opportunities for 160-megahertz wide unlicensed channels that are critical to sustain and enhancing Wi-Fi and other unlicensed connectivity—particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, on low-band spectrum, I announced over the summer that, following the FCC's successful two-sided auction that allowed for the repurposing of the 600 MHz band, the FCC had accomplished its objective to transition a large number of broadcast TV stations to new frequencies to clear the 600 MHz band spectrum for wireless use.

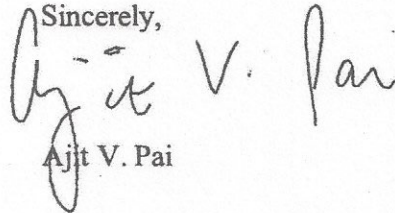
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Thank you for the opportunity to review GAO's recommendations. We look forward to continuing to engage in a productive dialogue with GAO in the future, so that we can continue to fulfill Congress's statutory objectives for the benefit of the American people.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai

cc: The Honorable James Inhofe  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
The Honorable Marco Rubio  
The Honorable Mark Warner  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
The Honorable Adam Schiff  
The Honorable Devin Nunes  
The Honorable Bill Foster  
The Honorable Richard Burr  
The Honorable Mikie Sherrill





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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THE CHAIRMAN

December 28, 2020

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
425 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Cantwell:

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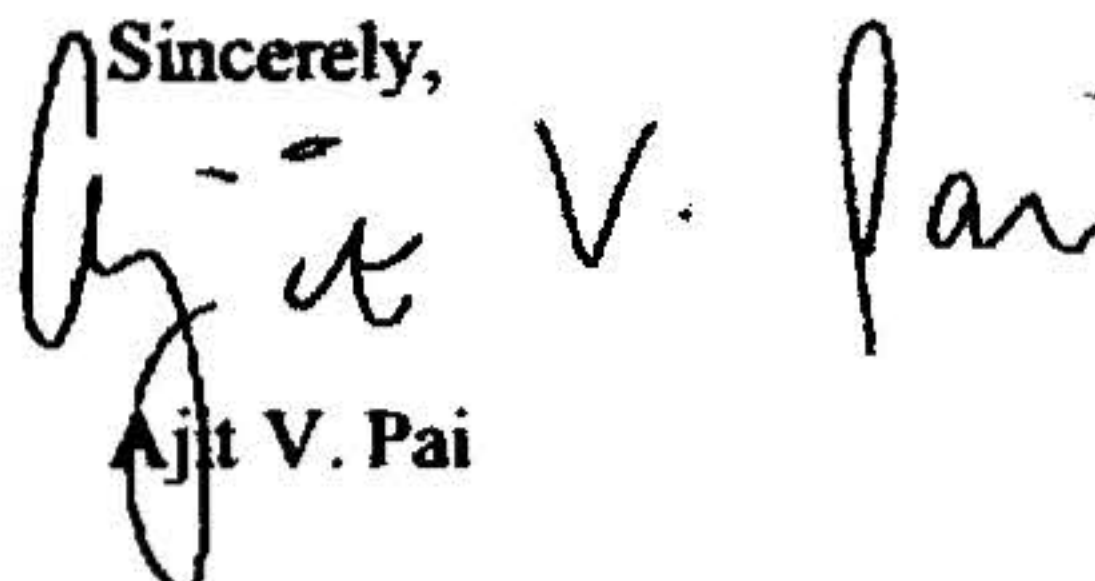
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The Honorable James R. Comer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
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2471 Rayburn House Office Building  
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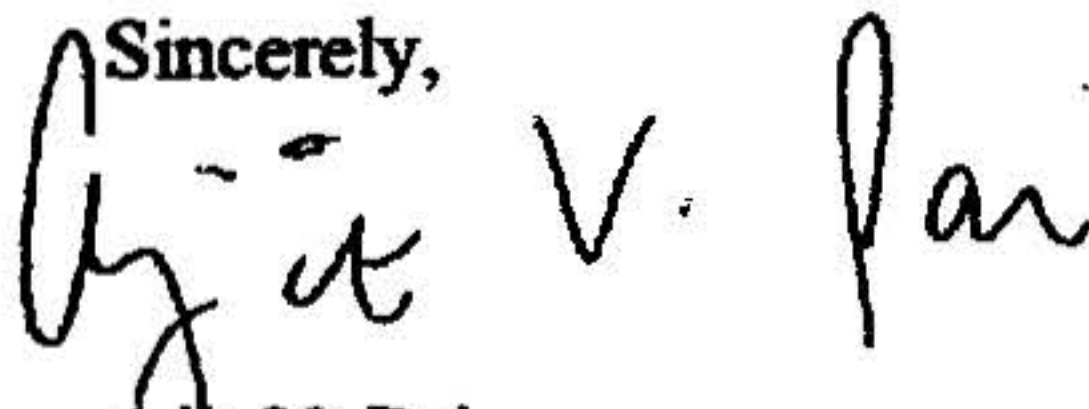
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December 28, 2020

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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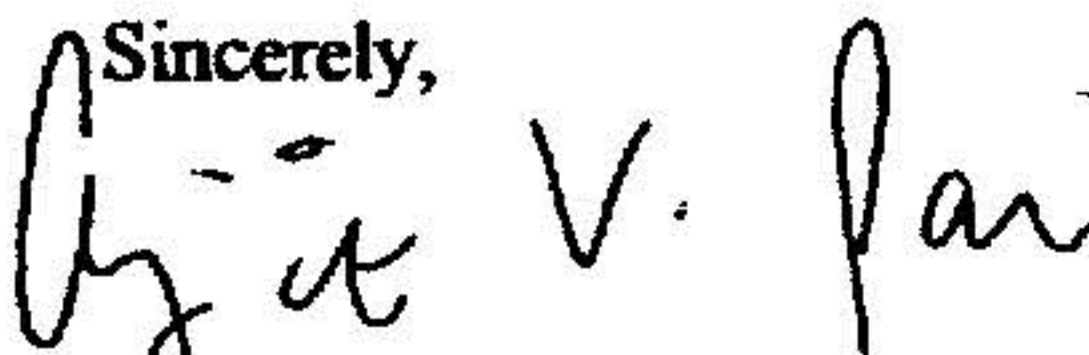
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December 28, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
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U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
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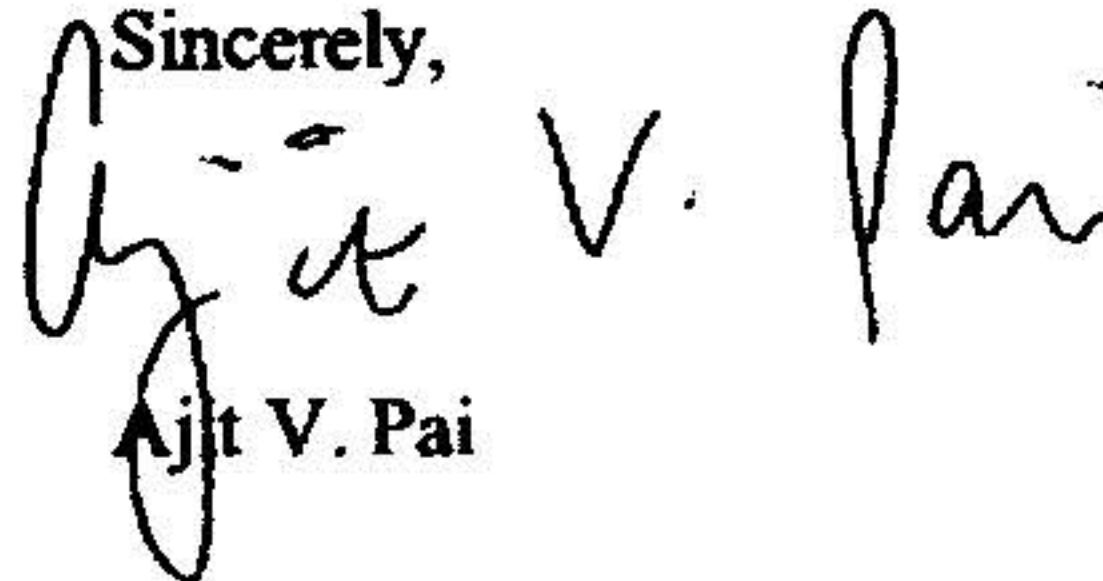
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" and last name "Pai" being more prominent than the middle initial "V.".

Ajit V. Pai

cc: The Honorable James Inhofe  
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Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate  
442 Hart Senate Office Building  
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I share your interest in ensuring that the FCC sets and achieves goals to facilitate the deployment of 5G and other advanced wireless services, including making spectrum available, determining the effects of 5G deployment, and ensuring that 5G deployment and related efforts close the digital divide. As Chairman, one of my top priorities has been the development and implementation of the 5G FAST Plan, which has allowed us to push more spectrum into the marketplace, remove unnecessary barriers to the deployment of infrastructure, and modernize outdated regulations. As the Report acknowledges, the Commission has taken numerous steps to achieve the goals of the 5G FAST Plan, including dramatically increasing the availability of low-, mid- and high-band spectrum. For instance, on high-band spectrum, we executed the goals of the 5G FAST Plan by making available and auctioning 4,950 megahertz of spectrum. To put that in perspective, that is more spectrum than was used for terrestrial mobile broadband by all wireless service providers in the United States combined before these auctions started. On mid-band, which the GAO Report identifies as critical, we executed the 5G FAST Plan by making 150 megahertz of spectrum available in the 3.5 GHz band (3550-3700 MHz), beginning an auction earlier this month of 280 megahertz of spectrum at 3.7-3.98 GHz, and proposing a plan to prepare for auction 100 megahertz of spectrum in the 3.45-3.55 GHz band. I would also highlight our efforts to make available unassigned spectrum in the 2.5 GHz band (2496-2690 MHz), including granting more than 150 applications for overlay licenses covering rural Tribal lands as part of our Rural Tribal Priority Window. We are currently in the process of granting additional Rural Tribal Priority Window license applications through a second processing round



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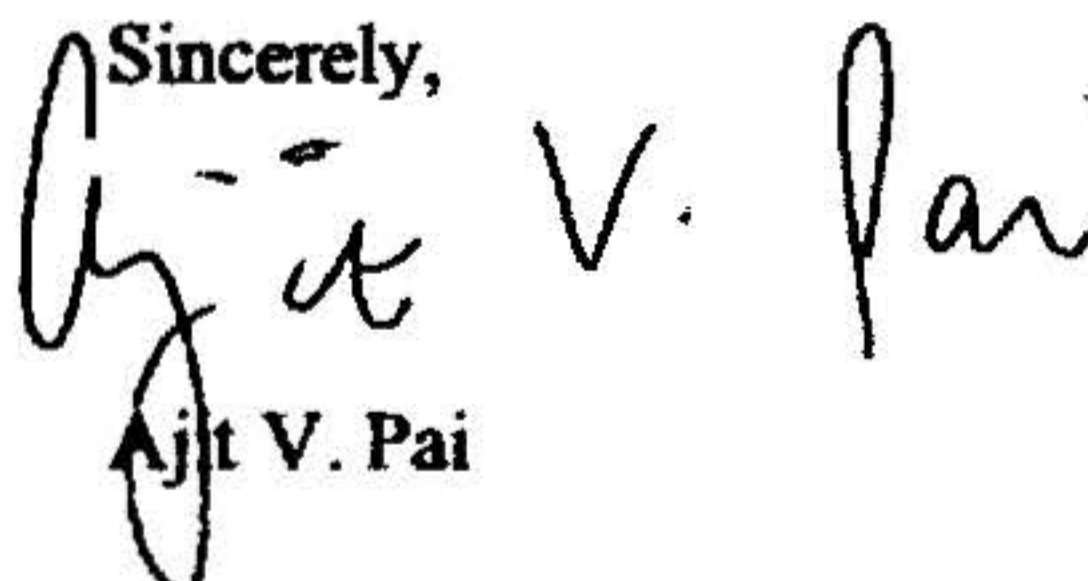
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Thank you for the opportunity to review GAO's recommendations. We look forward to continuing to engage in a productive dialogue with GAO in the future, so that we can continue to fulfill Congress's statutory objectives for the benefit of the American people.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai

cc: The Honorable James Inhofe  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
The Honorable Marco Rubio  
The Honorable Mark Warner  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
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The Honorable Devin Nunes  
The Honorable Bill Foster  
The Honorable Richard Burr  
The Honorable Mikie Sherrill





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 28, 2020

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Walden:

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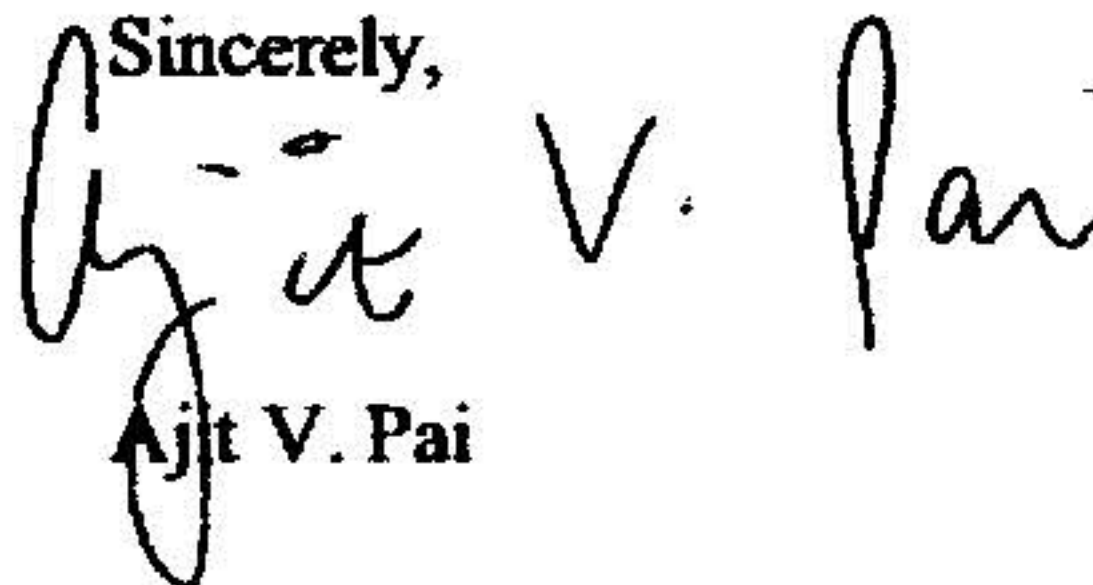
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The Honorable Mikie Sherrill





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 28, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker:

On June 29, 2020, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) publicly released a report entitled 5G DEPLOYMENT: FCC Needs Comprehensive Strategic Planning to Guide Its Efforts, GAO 20-468. The Report addressed challenges with 5G deployment, including the federal government's role in managing the availability of spectrum, deployment of 5G networks, and closing the digital divide. The Report recommends that the FCC Chairman "develop, in coordination with NTIA and other relevant stakeholders, specific and measurable performance goals—with related strategies and measures—to manage spectrum demands associated with 5G deployment." It recommends that the FCC Chairman also develop such performance goals "to determine the effects 5G deployment and any mitigating actions may have on the digital divide."

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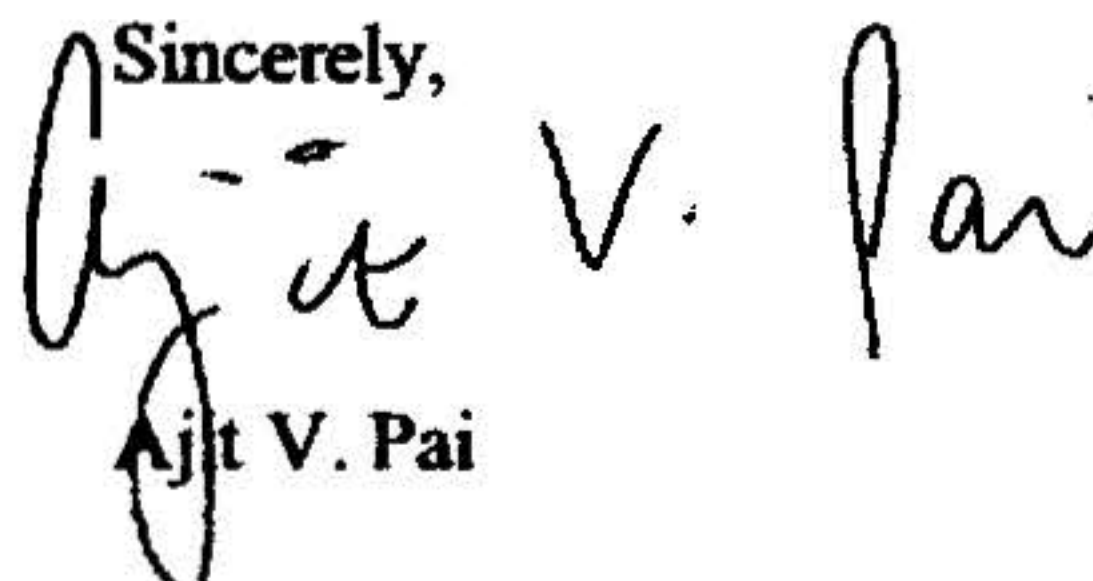
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The Honorable Richard Burr  
The Honorable Mikie Sherrill





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 28, 2020

The Honorable Chris Coons  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Coons:

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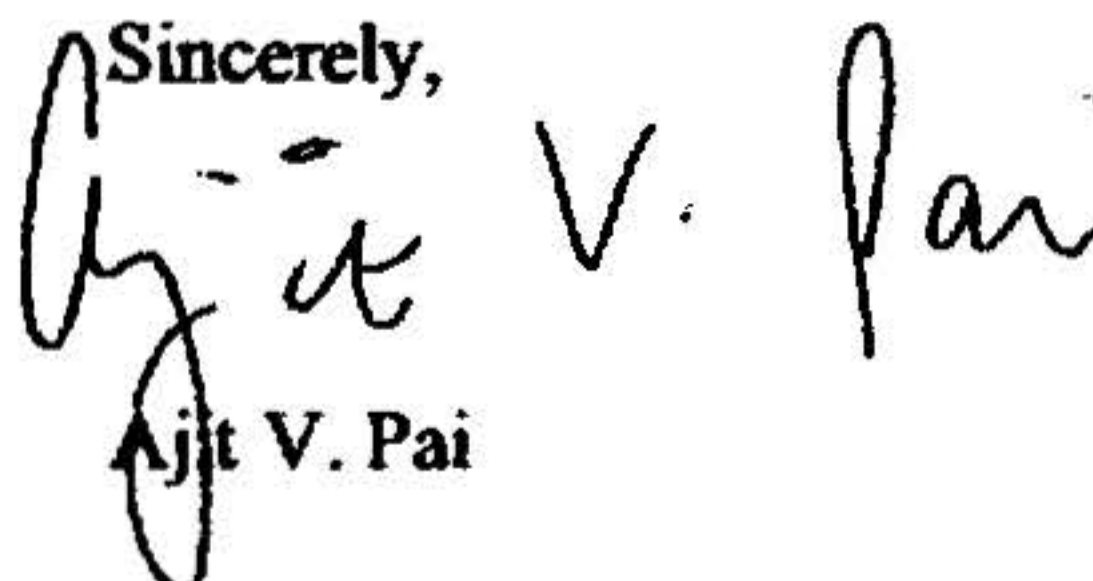
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The Honorable Bill Foster  
The Honorable Richard Burr  
The Honorable Mikie Sherrill





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 28, 2020

The Honorable John N. Kennedy  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128 The Capital Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy:

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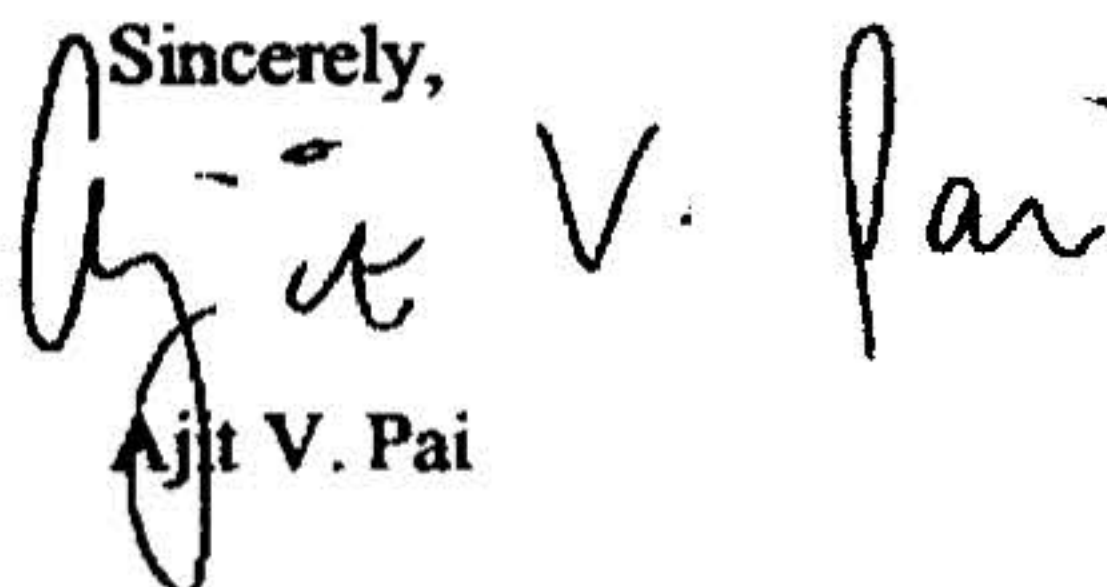
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 28, 2020

The Honorable Mike Quigley  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2000 Rayburn House Office Building (G Floor)  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Quigley:

On June 29, 2020, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) publicly released a report entitled 5G DEPLOYMENT: FCC Needs Comprehensive Strategic Planning to Guide Its Efforts, GAO 20-468. The Report addressed challenges with 5G deployment, including the federal government's role in managing the availability of spectrum, deployment of 5G networks, and closing the digital divide. The Report recommends that the FCC Chairman "develop, in coordination with NTIA and other relevant stakeholders, specific and measurable performance goals—with related strategies and measures—to manage spectrum demands associated with 5G deployment." It recommends that the FCC Chairman also develop such performance goals "to determine the effects 5G deployment and any mitigating actions may have on the digital divide."

I share your interest in ensuring that the FCC sets and achieves goals to facilitate the deployment of 5G and other advanced wireless services, including making spectrum available, determining the effects of 5G deployment, and ensuring that 5G deployment and related efforts close the digital divide. As Chairman, one of my top priorities has been the development and implementation of the 5G FAST Plan, which has allowed us to push more spectrum into the marketplace, remove unnecessary barriers to the deployment of infrastructure, and modernize outdated regulations. As the Report acknowledges, the Commission has taken numerous steps to achieve the goals of the 5G FAST Plan, including dramatically increasing the availability of low-, mid- and high-band spectrum. For instance, on high-band spectrum, we executed the goals of the 5G FAST Plan by making available and auctioning 4,950 megahertz of spectrum. To put that in perspective, that is more spectrum than was used for terrestrial mobile broadband by all wireless service providers in the United States combined before these auctions started. On mid-band, which the GAO Report identifies as critical, we executed the 5G FAST Plan by making 150 megahertz of spectrum available in the 3.5 GHz band (3550-3700 MHz), beginning an auction earlier this month of 280 megahertz of spectrum at 3.7-3.98 GHz, and proposing a plan to prepare for auction 100 megahertz of spectrum in the 3.45-3.55 GHz band. I would also highlight our efforts to make available unassigned spectrum in the 2.5 GHz band (2496-2690 MHz), including granting more than 150 applications for overlay licenses covering rural Tribal lands as part of our Rural Tribal Priority Window. We are currently in the process of granting



additional Rural Tribal Priority Window license applications through a second processing round and hope to quickly complete our review of the remaining applications. We have also made significant mid-band spectrum available for unlicensed service. This year, we made 1,200 megahertz of spectrum available for unlicensed use in the 6 GHz band, spurring the deployment of Wi-Fi 6, the next generation of Wi-Fi technology. We likewise voted to open-up an additional 45 megahertz of unlicensed spectrum in the 5.850-5.895 GHz band for advanced broadband use, including connectivity in rural and underserved areas. Our decision on the 5.9 GHz band immediately made this spectrum available for indoor use in conjunction with other, adjacent-band unlicensed spectrum, creating opportunities for 160-megahertz wide unlicensed channels that are critical to sustain and enhancing Wi-Fi and other unlicensed connectivity—particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, on low-band spectrum, I announced over the summer that, following the FCC's successful two-sided auction that allowed for the repurposing of the 600 MHz band, the FCC had accomplished its objective to transition a large number of broadcast TV stations to new frequencies to clear the 600 MHz band spectrum for wireless use.

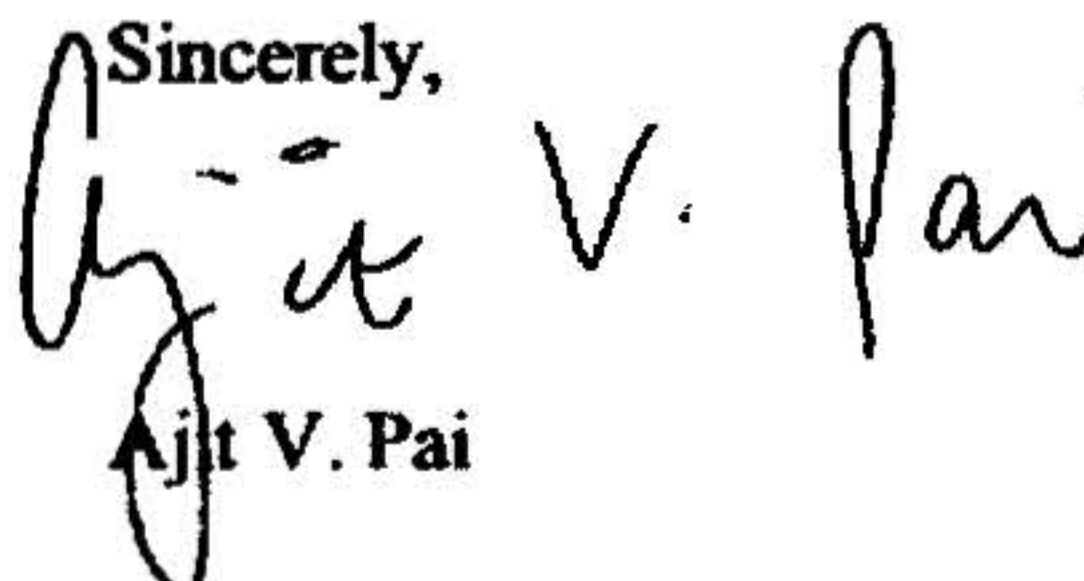
In their May 20, 2020 comments on the draft report, the Chiefs of the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Wireline Competition Bureau, along with the Acting Chief of the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology, noted some of the efforts described above that were underway or completed. As described in this response, in order to fulfill its dual responsibilities to adopt policies after a notice and comment process and to effectively and efficiently manage the spectrum, the Commission must approach spectrum proceedings with an open mind as to what is practically and scientifically achievable. As detailed in that response, that requires the Commission to weigh the public record and conduct extensive engineering, economic, and technical analyses that drives our determinations about band-specific proposals. Finally, the response noted that because the Commission's authority encompasses non-federal use of spectrum, we must coordinate with NTIA and other stakeholders on proposals in bands with federal government equities. I concur with the statement in this response that it would be unwise to prejudge the engineering, economic, and other technical outcomes of proceedings by setting artificial benchmarks, as GAO recommends. As an independent regulatory authority, our goal always is to put spectrum to the highest and best use in the public interest, which we accomplish by relying upon our transparent and inclusive administrative process, which is seen as a model for regulatory authorities around the world.

I continue to believe the approach in the 5G FAST Plan, described above, strikes a reasonable and appropriate balance between setting ambitious strategic goals and preserving flexibility and appropriate scientific and technical judgment in evaluating proposals.

Additionally, I note that since the release of the report, the Commission adopted a report and order establishing a 5G Fund for Rural America on October 27, 2020. As the Chiefs of the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Wireline Competition Bureau and the Acting Chief of the Office of Engineering and Technology indicated in their May 20, 2020 letter, the 5G Fund for Rural America will address shortcomings in 5G deployment in rural areas. This fund includes specific performance standards and reporting requirements, including specific parameters. These requirements will focus our 5G Fund on the areas that are most in need of support to close the digital divide.



Thank you for the opportunity to review GAO's recommendations. We look forward to continuing to engage in a productive dialogue with GAO in the future, so that we can continue to fulfill Congress's statutory objectives for the benefit of the American people.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai

cc: The Honorable James Inhofe  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
The Honorable Marco Rubio  
The Honorable Mark Warner  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
The Honorable Adam Schiff  
The Honorable Devin Nunes  
The Honorable Bill Foster  
The Honorable Richard Burr  
The Honorable Mikie Sherrill





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

December 28, 2020

The Honorable Steve Womack  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1036 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Womack:

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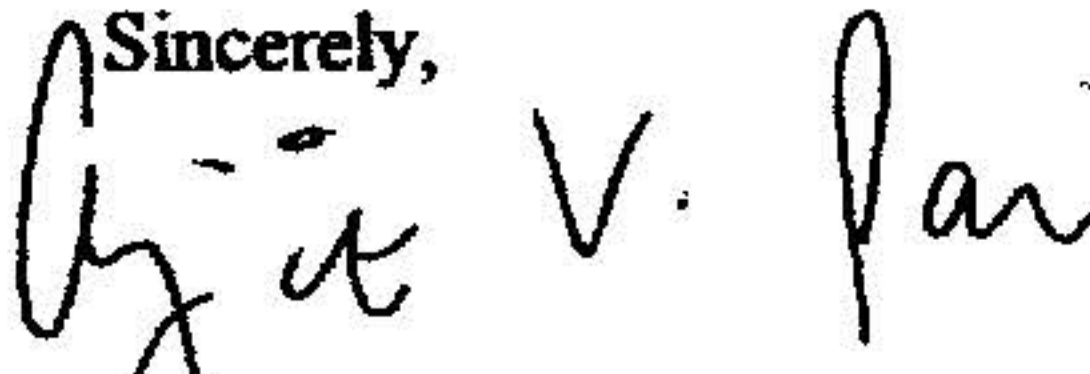
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